

# On the relations of Slavery to the War, and on the treatment of it necessary to permanent peace.

## A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR THOUGHTFUL AND PATRIOTIC MEN.

8.

### INTRODUCTION.

The fathers of the Constitution sincerely desired and expected the rapid disappearance of slavery from all the States. Accordingly they made enactments applicable to slaves under the names of persons, but not applicable to them exclusively, so that they would still be appropriate when slavery should cease to exist. The Constitution left slavery with the States, not to be preserved, but to be got rid of in a way most convenient for each. In seven of the old thirteen States it was soon abolished. In six it still lingered, but in most of them doubtfully, until the emergence of Cotton and the Cotton Gin. Up to that period there had been but one opinion in regard to it, namely, that it is a moral and political evil, but one to be managed exclusively by the States in which it exists.

Between that time and the present, four opinions have made their appearance in the North, different either in their estimate of the character of slavery, or in the practical treatment of it which they propose.

### FIRST OPINION.

The first opinion is that of the Abolitionists—which naturally originated when it became apparent that some of the States did not intend to carry out in good faith the purpose and implied promise of the Fathers. This opinion holds that slavery is in violation of the principles of Christianity,—that it is a moral evil, a *sin*. So far many others besides abolitionists agree with them. But this opinion holds, moreover, that the Government and citizens of the *United States* are morally responsible for the continuance of this evil, and that therefore *they ought to abolish it*, peaceably if they can, forcibly if they must. This opinion, however, has failed to awaken any feeling of responsibility in more than in a few minds, because the prevailing opinion is that the Constitution left the abolition of slavery (however unfortunately) wholly with the States; and therefore all moral responsibility in regard to it rests upon the citizens of the States where it exists, and not upon the citizens of the United States.

Hence the number of abolitionists, *in this sense*, always has been, and is, extremely small.

### SECOND OPINION.

It is not to be inferred that the people of the United States approve of slavery, as they have been falsely accused, because so few of them are abolitionists. The whole subject was almost lost sight of so long as universal emancipation by the States themselves sooner or later was expected. Since that time has appeared the *anti-slavery* opinion. It does not differ essentially from that of the abolitionists in its estimate of slavery. It holds it to be a social, political and moral evil, a sin for all *willing* slaveholders. But it proposes a treatment of it different from that of the abolitionists. It would bring to bear all christian and persuasive in-

fluences which one christian may exert upon another, and the citizens of one State may rightfully use towards those of another, to induce *slaveholders themselves* to abolish slavery wherever it exists. Wherever Congress has exclusive jurisdiction, as especially in the Territories, it would exclude slavery. And as Congress has control over admission to the Union it would admit no more slave states.

The anti-slavery opinion, taking the more correct view of the character and relations of slavery, and of the consequent duties, and legal and political powers of the citizens and government of the United States in regard to it, has gradually and of late (even before the war) rapidly increased. As the true character and designs of slavery have become more apparent this opinion has prevailed the more, until at the last presidential election a majority of the people of the north had become in opinion and practice anti-slavery.

### THIRD OPINION.

This opinion is that of *indifference* to the moral character of slavery and considers it merely as a form of labor. If the people of a State or Territory think they can procure the most profitable labor by making the laborers slaves, this opinion holds that they have a right to do so,—that such people are neither to be morally rebuked, nor politically or legally restrained.

This deadly moral and political depravity the South and its allies have made desperate efforts to extend over the whole North. But if at one time there seemed danger of their success, it was because so many followed *blindly* party names and party leaders, urged on by party watchwords, and incessant sophistry and lies; and not because of a fully informed approval of the doctrines and purposes of those who directed them.

### FOURTH OPINION.

The fourth opinion has been developed *mostly* by the rebellion, and has relation especially to the *political* aspect of slavery. This opinion holds that the existence of slavery is incompatible with the permanent peace, political welfare, and even existence of the nation; and its practical conclusion is that it *must be destroyed*. This relation of northern mind to slavery is at present mostly in the form of a widely prevalent instinctive *feeling*, but beginning to express itself distinctly at a great many points. This opinion is taking the place, or the *lead*, of all the others, and if true, ought to be encouraged and become universal. In many minds, however, there are still doubts of its truth, and many others refuse to *admit* it, because of the supposed practical difficulties in the treatment of slavery which this opinion necessarily involves—except for those who are willing that the United States should become another Mexican Republic.

### TRUTH OF THE FOURTH OPINION.

This would seem to be obvious enough to all who have witnessed the disposition and conduct of slaveholders for the last ten years, and especially since the last presidential election. If their treason were mere vexation at the loss of political power it might be sufficient to convince them once for all, that they cannot take by the sword what is refused them by the ballot box. But if the causes of their present infamous attempt are inherent in the very nature, necessities and relations of slavery, causes

which must become constantly more and more urgent the longer slavery exists, then consequences like the present, or worse, cannot fail to be repeated at intervals longer or shorter according to circumstances.

Suppose the present war ended, and that the revolted States have taken their place as before under the Constitution, or with any modifications of the Constitution which should not abolish slavery—it is plain that all the past irritations between the North and the South would be increased, and that they would all have their origin in slavery.

FIRST.—A fugitive slave law would be a stronger necessity of slavery than before, from the hope and instinct of freedom increased by the war—would be obeyed by the North with greater reluctance than before, because with still stronger feelings of shame, and more painful violations of conscience, and of course would be oftener disobeyed.

SECOND.—The disputes in regard to the territories would be more violent than before. On the part of the North, its present experience of the faithless and dangerous character of slavery would make it more than ever determined, both for moral and political reasons, to prevent its extension and the increase of its power.

On the part of the South—if it should still hope to recover the balance of political power by the formation of new slave states, this would give rise to constant collisions, as in Kansas. Or if the territory below a certain latitude be yielded to slavery, then there would be constant filibustering for new conquests by the South, with jealousy, fear, and veto by the North. But if the South give up the hope of equal political power, this of itself would be a standing source of irritation and anger against the North, and there would still remain the inherent necessity of slavery to expand. Because the *interest* of the slave-producing states would demand a permanent market, and the *safety* of the planting states would demand room, lest the operation of the laws of population should become destructive both of slavery and slaveholders. With both North and South this question would be one of self-preservation, of life and death, and the conflict would be “irrepressible.”

THIRD.—If the South is subdued and obliged to return to a pretended allegiance it will be with the most bitter feelings towards the North, and that clause of the Constitution which “entitles the citizens of each State to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States” would be more often violated than hitherto, but the violation would not be as patiently tolerated by the victorious North as hitherto.

FOURTH.—The character of slavery would be more fiercely assailed than ever—its enemies being able to add to “the sum of all villainies” those of rebellion and treason.

FIFTH.—The South would still complain, however without reason as heretofore, of the unjust operation of tariffs and other commercial regulations; and of the intention of the North to interfere with their Institution.

I. Under such circumstances would the South, *in the Union*, remain helpless and peaceful? Not in the least. Stimulated by wounded pride, desire of revenge, and fear—besides all the reasons which have induced the present rebellion—it would instantly set about laying the foundations of another, and better planned revolt. Restored to its place under the Constitution, the South would still hold the balance of power between Northern parties; and party leaders, who so rarely prefer country to party

would play into their hands as heretofore. The South, meanwhile, quietly making its preparations under "the right of the people to keep and bear arms;" by the establishment of manufactures and by a more varied agriculture acquiring the means of defence and offence even under blockade—would, in thirty years, be vastly superior to its present self as a war-making power, and under the influence of stronger motives to make war than at present. Thus the interval, which the good natured North might call *peace*, would prove to be only a treacherous, and probably *fatal truce*.

II. But suppose the South to go *out of the Union*, and its independence to be acknowledged. It is plain that none of the causes of disagreement, irritation, mutual jealousy and fear, and so of war, would be removed or diminished, but rather increased. There would still be fugitive slaves. And the South has already threatened, that, *then*, the North will be a "police, at its peril," to prevent their escape.

The South, from the very nature of its institutions, must be a war-like power and aim at conquest, that is, increase of territory, while the North would have stronger motives to prevent the extension of slavery than ever before. The mutual jealousy in regard to physical power would take the place of that in regard to political power—both parties reproaching each other for the necessity of maintaining standing armies, and an expense for Government and protection a hundred fold greater than they have been accustomed to. Add the mutual reproaches of abolitionists, and slaveholders, and the insults to which Northern men would be subjected at the South—and we should be much more appropriately called "natural enemies" than ever were France and England.

The opinion developed by the war, then, will be found to be true in proportion as we examine all the relations of the case. The conclusion seems inevitable, that the permanent peace, welfare, and safety of the Nation, are impossible while slavery exists, whether the slaveholding states are in the Union or out of it.

Since the truth of this opinion is undeniable, the practical inference that slavery *must be abolished*, is urged by paramount, and the most imperative reasons which ever control the conduct of statesmen. The necessity of this inference is beginning to be felt everywhere in the North, and would be universally acknowledged, were the reasons for it fully apprehended by all. But many, perhaps most, even then, would hesitate to adopt the extreme measure of abolition—some on account of the *difficulties*, some on account of the *objections* which oppose it.

#### THE DIFFICULTIES.

And *first*, the *physical* difficulty. To declare the slaves free without the power to make them so, would of course be only empty words. But whenever slaves from the seceded States escape within the lines of our armies, or elsewhere, let them be declared free, and be treated as free men. In whatever region our armies have control let the slaves be emancipated by the war-power, or by Congress. This would excite the expectations of the slaves throughout the country, and render them much less serviceable to their masters in carrying on the war than they are at present. If we can compel the South to return (as we intend) *with* slavery, we can much more easily *without* it.

*Second*—The *legal* and *moral* difficulties. We do not easily divest ourselves of the feelings habitual to us from our relations to the Slave States under the Constitution, hence we still hear talk of the "rights of the South," "obligation to keep faith," and so forth.

But suppose these legal relations still to exist, as they do in regard to some States, yet, as of old and always, *salus populi SUPREMA LEX*. That is, the *existence* of the Nation is paramount to all particular forms, institutions, and relations of it. These can have no legal or other right to be, whenever they become incompatible with the safety of the State, whatever may have been their claims before.

But, moreover, without appeal to the *ultima ratio*, Congress is required by the Constitution to pass all laws necessary for the execution of all its chartered powers; and undoubtedly to preserve the existence, integrity, and safety of the Nation is among the powers of the National Government under the Constitution. These highest exigencies, touching the being, or the essential well-being of the nation, either by the Constitution, or above the Constitution, if need be, override all laws and compacts—these always implying the condition *salva Republica*.

The legal and moral difficulties, then, we might reckon sufficiently disposed of. But, more in detail, in regard to the two classes to be immediately affected by emancipation. The revolted States, and rebels everywhere, have removed these difficulties by their own act,—the Government is under no legal or other obligation to treat them otherwise than as declared enemies, and to render them as powerless for offence as possible, both now, and hereafter.

The *loyal* Slave-States and individuals, if they are truly such, will consent (on conditions to be agreed upon with such states) to what the common safety requires, or if any should insist on sacrificing the public good to private convenience or opinion, it would be at the option of the government to treat them as rebels, or as in other cases where property is taken without the consent of the owner. The true ultimate interest of the border states is so obviously in the direction of freedom; the temporary inconvenience of becoming free states would now be so small; and the worst consequences of future disputes would so certainly fall upon us, as in the present instance, that it is difficult to believe that patriotic and loyal men will resist their own best good at the expense of the national safety.

*Third.* The *pecuniary* difficulty. So large a proportion of the slaves will be forfeited by the rebellion, and their value is so reduced by the war, that the pecuniary compensation required to effect universal emancipation, though sufficiently large, would be as nothing compared with the annual and perpetual expense of large standing armies, and other expenses indispensable to safety in consequence of the continuance of slavery. It would cost infinitely less to destroy slavery than to preserve it.

There are, then, no *difficulties* in the way of universal emancipation which should not equally require us to disband our armies, and accept such terms of peace as the South chooses to dictate.

### THE OBJECTIONS.

Suppose the *difficulties* of emancipation all removed, or overcome—still would the measure be advisable on the whole? Would not the consequences of emancipation be worse than those of permanent slavery? It has been shown that the permanence of slavery entails the very gravest evils, endangering not only the peace and prosperity, but the very life of the nation. Besides periodical and other enormous *annual* expenses, it involves the necessity of that heaviest curse of despotism, the perpetual maintenance of standing armies, eating out the substance of the people, and

destructive of their liberties, making us all poor toiling slaves for the sake of preserving slavery.

If the consequences of emancipation would be worse than these, then the objections to it are insuperable. Let us examine them.

FIRST. It is said that there would be the utmost danger in turning loose at once such vast numbers of ignorant men; that it would be an uncontrollable flood of barbarism destroying all before it;

But the objection forgets that in this case actual emancipation could only keep pace with the physical force sufficient to effect it, and that this same force would be present to control unfavorable results if any should arise. If, however, universal emancipation could be effected at once, there is no reason to fear insurrection *on the part of the negroes*. This calamity was confidently promised by slaveholders and their friends as the result of emancipation in the West Indies. But the negroes, though more ignorant, and in much larger proportion to the whites than with us, accepting joyfully the gift of freedom, by exemplary and quiet conduct of good citizens wholly falsified both the hopes of their enemies and the fears of their friends. It is *slaves* who rebel, not emancipated men, unless there is an attempt to reduce them again to slavery, as in St. Domingo. In Jamaica there has been no disturbance, and no fear of any since emancipation, but in the hundred years preceding that measure there had been *no less than thirty insurrections*. In our case the power that could emancipate could also control and protect. Or if any of the states should choose to emancipate in their own way the result would be the same. In either case the predicted danger would not exist. This first objection, therefore, is wholly without validity and may be dismissed.

SECOND. The second and great objection to emancipation is found in the supposed difficulty of answering the question, What shall be done with the negroes?

Since no *danger* is to be feared from them, this question resolves itself into another, namely, can *inconvenient* consequences of emancipation be avoided? No, they cannot. But this objection is valid only on condition that these inconveniences will be more disastrous than the consequences of permanent slavery, shown to be inevitable.

If it can be made to appear that the unfavorable effects of emancipation will be temporary, and that they will fall chiefly upon those who have made this measure necessary, and that ultimately the result will be beneficial both to late master and slave, and to the whole, now at length homogeneous, and truly *united* states, the objection of temporary evils however great should not prevent emancipation.

The question 'what shall be done with the negroes?' means how will their freedom affect *us*. In all *political* discussions involving the negro we commonly ignore *his* interests altogether. But notwithstanding our practical selfishness, the real and only reliable opposition to slavery at the North rests upon the instinctive feeling of its *injustice* to the slave. We may, then, without being liable to the charge of hypocrisy, ask, what shall be done with the negroes *in reference to their interests*? In answer to which it may be replied that they would be still needed to perform the same work as before, with the difference that now *their* interest would have to be consulted as well as that of their employers. As free laborers they would fall at once under the law of demand and supply, and as the demand would exceed the supply the inconveniences of emancipation would affect them not at all, except it might be by the attempt of

their late masters to compel them to work for inadequate wages. This, however, would injure the negro less than his employer, since it would deprive him of labor, while it stimulated the negro to acquire land for himself, as happened in Jamaica, where out of 320,000 persons, liberated less than thirty years ago, there are now 50,000 proprietors of small farms. That is, an immensely large proportion of the adult men have become owners of land. This has greatly elevated the condition and character of the negro as compared with slavery, but at the same time has made him nearly independent of his former master. He is under no great necessity to work except on his own land, and therefore will not work without fair wages—an unpardonable sin in the eyes of slaveholders—hence the reiterated slander that the negro will not work except on compulsion. Throughout the British West Indies, as is now acknowledged by everybody *there*, emancipation has been an infinite blessing to the negro. We need, then, do nothing with the negro, as far as he is concerned, but leave him to the care of Providence and his own wits.

In reference to *our own* interests, what *need we do* with the emancipated negroes? Nothing. As regards the North the only objection to emancipation is, the expense of it. But this would be in exchange of a hundred-fold greater expense, besides other evils of preserving slavery.

Would the South still secede after emancipation? All the reasons for doing so originate in slavery—besides it *could not*, without the cooperation of the negroes, but this could never be obtained because it would subject them to be again enslaved.

Would there be the same danger as under slavery, of an accumulation of the black race, especially in the planting States, so that the country would ultimately come into their hands? There would not. Because the most enterprising and intelligent colored men would be drawn towards regions where their social relations would be more inviting, as Liberia and some of the West Indies. And because the free labor system would lead to another result in the planting States not greatly to be deplored, viz: the breaking up of large estates into smaller ones, the development of a strong middle class of white men, and the more equal distribution of land and wealth throughout the community, instead of having both accumulated in the hands of a few hundred nabobs, constituting a proud and domineering plantocracy trampling upon herds of miserable slaves, and more miserable landless whites. This result will be most obstinately resisted by the planting slaveholders. To be deprived of this kind of dominion, of the delightful consciousness of patrician rank, and of purity free of all the contaminations of *labor*, that servile thing, which so pollutes and degrades all Northern men that there is *no gentleman* north of Mason and Dixon's line—this would be for them the direst of evils. This devilish pride has begotten rebellion, treason and war, and will be at all times hereafter, until it is humbled, ready to reproduce them. The humiliation of this would be for the slaveholders the truly dreadful consequence of emancipation; that it is, therefore, an insuperable objection to the measure, will by some be doubted.

Another serious temporary inconvenience of emancipation would fall, almost exclusively, upon the cotton and sugar planters of the extreme South (not much to be regretted by those who have any instinct of justice). They might find themselves for a time in the condition of Western farmers, that is, suffering from a scarcity of labor, while the nature of their crops makes this a greater evil than in ordinary farming. But

as most of the laborers would remain in the same regions as before, this would resolve itself into the necessity—until the relations of labor and employment became settled—of offering wages which might diminish the profits of the planter. That this would be temporary and that free labor, at remunerating prices for the laborer, is more efficient and more profitable than slave labor, even in sugar planting, is proved by experiment on a large scale in Barbadoes, as freely acknowledged by planters themselves. The following is an example of a single plantation. Under slavery the estate had 230 slaves, and averaged 140 hogsheads of sugar, at a cost of 10 pounds 12 shillings per hogshead. It is now worked by 90 free laborers, and has averaged for the last seven years, 194 hogsheads at a cost of 4 pounds per hogshead. Under slavery the average product of sugar was 1,043 pounds to the hand; under freedom 3,360 pounds. Here is a wide margin for higher wages than was given in this case, before free labor would become less profitable than slavery.

There are, then, no insuperable difficulties, and no objections of a feather's weight in the way of emancipation, in comparison with the advantages to be derived from it. For, from what dreadful and endless evils would both South and North be at once and forever delivered by it! All causes of dispute removed, no longer antagonists in irrepressible conflict, they would, from the very nature of their differences of climate, productions, and employments, rapidly become the necessary and peaceful complements of each other, thus constituting one *whole, complete* Nation, in the fullest sense *independent*, and therefore always *peaceful*, and at the same time impregnable against the world.

It has been the purpose of this tract to consider only the political and economic relations of slavery, and as affecting ourselves. But, surely, it is not to be placed among the objections to emancipation that all the friends of the Union, and of free government everywhere would rejoice at the removal of the blot of slavery from the otherwise truly model Republic—that our aristocratic enemies of the old world would be cheated of their malicious hopes and exultation at our eagerly expected ruin—and that all Christian men throughout the world would thank God that Christianity had at length asserted its power to make even this conquest. For to the mighty power of Christianity, underlying all more visible and immediate causes, would the result be owing, to Christianity due the honor of the victory.

P. S.—Since writing the above I find the same view of the necessity of emancipation in a speech of Earl Russell, at Newcastle:—"We now see two parties contending together, *not upon the question of Slavery*—though that I believe is the original cause of the conflict. I cannot help asking myself as affairs progress in the contest, *to what good end can it lead*. Supposing this contest ended, and that the South should agree to enter again with all the rights of the Constitution, should we not again have that fatal subject of Slavery brought in along with them? (Hurrah.) Should we not have those who differed from Mr. Lincoln at the last election carried back into the Union, and thus sooner or later the quarrel would recommence, and perhaps a long civil war follow?" This is the view of all our friends in Europe, and of all Statesmen there. They look upon the conflict—*unless it aim at the destruction of Slavery, its essential and only cause*—as a mere waste of blood and treasure, a waste to be often repeated so long as Slavery exists, whether in the Union or out of it.

At present we have little foreign sympathy, with great danger of foreign intervention; while we might have in Europe a popular enthusiasm on our side which would give great moral aid, and render intervention impossible. For the Government to reject the true course out of deference to one or two doubtful border States—if they should insist on thwarting the best good of the country and their own—is just the old fable of the Dog and the Shadow. The contest would not be rendered more obstinate; because the South has been already made to believe that abolition is the purpose of the North, and cannot be made to think otherwise. Let the lie invented by Southern